

ANGUS COUNCIL

**SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE 22 AUGUST 2023
ANGUS COUNCIL 7 SEPTEMBER 2023**

ANGUS CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2021 - 2022

**REPORT BY MARGO WILLIAMSON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE ANGUS COUNCIL AND MEMBER OF
ANGUS CHIEF OFFICERS' GROUP**

ABSTRACT

This report presents the Angus Child Protection Committee Annual Report for August 2021 to July 2022. Chief Officers across Scotland are individually and collectively responsible for the leadership, direction and scrutiny of their respective child protection services and their Child Protection Committees. In Angus, the Child Protection Committee reports directly to the Chief Officers' Group. A number of Angus Council services are members of the Child Protection Committee reflecting both the multi-faceted nature of risk and the whole system responsibility to support its mitigation.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny and Audit Committee:

- (i) Scrutinises and comment on the Angus Child Protection Committee (ACPC) Annual Report 2021 to 2022 (appended to this report)
- (ii) Considers the key trends and areas for development emerging from the report

1.2 It is recommended that Angus Council:

- (i) Reviews the content of the Angus Child Protection Committee (ACPC) Annual Report 2021 to 2022 (appended to this report)
- (ii) Notes the Council's cross departmental responsibilities in relation to Child Protection

2. ALIGNMENT TO CORPORATE PLANS

This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within:

The Angus Community Plan:

- Provide the best start in life for children
- Improve physical and mental health and wellbeing
- Create more opportunities for people to live well and achieve their personal goals

The Council Plan:

- Support children, young people and adults to access appropriate opportunities which allow them to progress in their learning.
- Deliver the Angus "Our Bright Futures Plan."
- When children cannot safely live at home, keep our children local in Angus, providing for their education and family needs.

The Tayside Plan for Children, Young People and Families 2021-23

- Our children having the best start in life in a nurturing environment
- Our children growing up healthy, confident and resilient with improving physical and mental health and strengthened emotional wellbeing

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The previous [ACPC Annual Report 2020 to 2021](#) covered the period April 2020 to July 2021 to bring us in line with national reporting requirements (the academic year reporting period rather than the previous financial year reporting period).
- 3.2 This Annual Report of ACPC for the period August 2021 to July 2022 presents the work undertaken across Angus by individual agencies and in partnership to deliver national, Tayside-wide, and local child protection outcomes to improve the lives of children at risk of harm.
- 3.3 The Annual Report was approved by ACPC on 21 July 2023 and the Angus Chief Officer Group on 28th July 2023.
- 3.4 The ACPC is chaired by an Independent Chair who offers leadership, direction, scrutiny and challenge to all members of the ACPC. The ACPC meets minimally 4 times per year with an expectation that ACPC members ensure a high level of attendance either in person or by an appropriate delegate. Attendance at ACPC is reported to Angus Chief Officers Group (COG) as part of routine reporting of the ACPC Risk Register. There are no exceptional or unmanaged risks highlighted in the annual report.

4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 ACPC have continued to work together to improve child protection practice in Angus throughout the reporting period.
- 4.2 Of note during the reporting period are:
- The ongoing work of multi-agency partners to ensure that children and their families continue to be well supported as we come out of covid pandemic recovery and face other pressures such as those brought by the cost of living crisis.
 - A programme of reviewing and updating multi-agency policies and staff guidance has continued this year with ACPC agreeing the Underage Sexual Activity Protocol, Tayside Chronologies Guidance, Care and Risk Management (CARM) Guidance and an Angus Protocol for working with young people at risk of exploitation.
 - Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative (TRIC) have continued to support child protection practice based on agreed 'Priorities for Practice' for the multi-agency workforce across Tayside (Priorities for Practice emerged from joint Tayside research in 2020 – 21):
Priority 1 – Relationship with Children and Families
Priority 2 – Working Together
 - ACPC were given assurance reports from the quality assurance work undertaken in respect of unborn babies and children birth to 18 identified by Police Scotland in a Child Concern Report, as requiring follow up and support.
 - Safe and Together Champions model was further rolled out in partnership with Angus Violence Against Women Partnership with 65 trained Champions are now working across services.
- 4.3 Key trends from the statistical part of the Annual Report demonstrate a continued increase in demand across frontline child protection services, these include:
- Similar numbers to the previous year of Child Concern Reports received from Police Scotland with an overall decrease from 2018. However, the number of Child Concern Reports with a child protection marker increased significantly this year (50% increase) indicating a multi-agency response is likely to be required.
 - This analysis is further supported as the number of referrals requiring follow up (by social work) shows an increase from 819 to 870 for the year and the number of initial referral discussions (a multi-agency response discussion) increased significantly from 272 to 392
 - Child Protection Investigations have remained at similar levels

- There has been an increase in the number of joint forensic medicals, however in considering the number of sibling groups presented for examination, the increase is more modest than first appears but will be monitored through the local ACPC dataset
 - Joint Investigative Interviews are recorded interviews with child victims. The number undertaken has increased this year with a return to pre-pandemic growth in this type of child interview
 - The number of children on the Angus Child Protection Register increased from 45 to 61 in the year. Domestic abuse and parental mental health are the most commonly recorded factors indicating risk of significant harm
- 4.4 The ACPC have been working on local implementation of the national dataset and have completed work so that in the future, consistent routine analysis of standard key performance indicators will inform child protection planning. The range of data presented in the report demonstrates a significant increase in demand for all services to deliver coordinated and supportive responses to protect children.
- 4.5 The ACPC Strategic Plan 2020-2023 is based around the core business functions of a Child Protection Committee as set out in the national Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021. The plan will also be flexible and regularly updated to include any emerging national or local priorities.
- 4.6 Areas for development and progression:
- Continue to analyse data through use of the local dataset and the roll out of the national dataset. The Self Evaluation and Continuous Improvement (SECI) group will provide the ACPC with trends and themes from the data and this will inform priority areas going forward. In particular, the development of robust data gathering systems will inform the writing of the strategic plan from 2024-2027
 - Practice and policy improvements will focus on developing coordinated responses to young people who present a risk to themselves or others through our Care and Risk Management (CARM) plans; by further embedding successful approaches such as PREpare and Leading the Promise engagement work; and designing and implementing an 'Involving Dads' strategy
 - Further align with other Protecting People Committees to ensure that there is a whole family approach and less duplication of work.
 - Undertake and report on a multi-agency practice evaluation to assess impact of Safe and Together and responses to domestic abuse
 - We will continue to strive for all Angus children to have a voice in decisions that are made about them. Angus Leading the Promise work will continue, ensuring that children and young people understand their rights and know where to go to seek advice, support, help and protection.

5. PROPOSALS

The Committee scrutinises and comments on the content of the ACPC Annual Report August 2021 to July 2022 and considers the key trends and areas for improvement arising from the report. The Independent Chair of the ACPC will be in attendance at Committee.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An Equality Impact Assessment screening assessment has been carried out, no full EIA is required as this is a report for information and scrutiny.

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List of Appendices: Angus Child Protection Committee Annual Report for 2021 to 2022